

REMARKS

Applicant has added new claims 40-47, which are fully supported by the original specification, and further, the subject matter of new claims 40-47 is substantially similar to that of the originally filed claims. As such, Applicant respectfully submits that the new claims 40-47 are allowable without further search, and requests their allowance.

Claims 1 and 18 have been amended to more specifically recite the subject matter.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Laguna Valderrama (U.S. Patent 5,811,060). Applicant traverses this rejection, and submits that claim 1 as amended is patentably distinct from Laguna Valderrama. Specifically, Laguna Valderrama does not disclose any flange other than its circular flange. As Applicant has previously argued, such a circular flange cannot be used for proper alignment. The amendments to claim 1 clearly recite the non-circular nature of the Applicant's flanges. As such, Laguna Valderrama does not contain each and every element of the claim, and the claim is allowable.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Laguna Valderrama in view of Long Jr. (U.S. Patent 6,059,134). Claims 2-3 depend from and further define patentably distinct claim 1, and are also believed allowable.

Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Laguna Valderrama in view of Long as applied to claims 2-3 above, and in further view of Burns (U.S. Patent 5,288,466). Claim 12 depends from and further defines patentably distinct claim 1, and is also believed allowable.

Claims 1-9, 12 and 18-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Burns in view of Long. Amended claims 1 and 18 recite non-circular flanges. Neither Burns nor Long et al., nor any combination thereof, suggests, teaches, or discloses any flange that is non-circular. As such, claims 1 and 18 are believed

allowable. Claims 2-9, 12, and 19-22 depend from and further define patentably distinct claims 1 or 18, and are also believed allowable

New Claims

New claims 40-43 depend from and further define patentably distinct claims 1 or 18, and are also believed allowable.

New claims 44-48 recite subject matter not present in the cited art, and are also believed allowable. Support for the new claims is clear in the specification, and the subject matter of the new claims should already have been searched, and Applicant therefore submits that no new search is required.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-9, 12, 18-22, and 40-47 are in condition for allowance and requests reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's Representatives at direct dial (612) 312-2203 if there are any questions regarding this Response or if prosecution of this application may be assisted thereby.

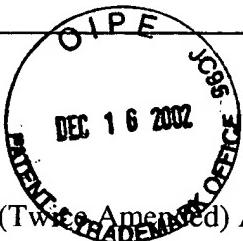
Respectfully submitted,

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MARKED-UP VERSION

1. (Twice Amended) A cap and vessel comprising:
 - a threaded cap having a non-circular cap flange; and
 - a threaded vessel having a non-circular vessel flange of substantially the same shape as the cap flange, wherein the threaded cap is secured to the threaded vessel when the cap flange and vessel flange are aligned.
18. (Amended) A method for sealing a vessel, comprising the steps of:
 - placing a threaded cap having a non-circular cap flange on a threaded vessel having a corresponding non-circular vessel flange; and
 - securing the threaded cap to the threaded vessel a first time by rotating the threaded cap in one direction, the threaded cap secured to the threaded vessel when the cap flange and vessel flange are aligned.
40. (New) The cap and vessel of claim 1, wherein the cap flange and the vessel flange are multiple edged.
41. (New) The cap and vessel of claim 1, wherein the shape of the cap flange and the vessel flange are chosen from a group consisting of substantially square, substantially triangular, substantially rectangular, and substantially octagonal.
42. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the cap flange and the vessel flange are multiple edged.
43. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the shape of the cap flange and the vessel flange are chosen from a group consisting of substantially square, substantially triangular, substantially rectangular, and substantially octagonal.

44. (New) A cap and vessel, comprising:
 - a threaded cap having a cap flange; and
 - a threaded vessel having a vessel flange of substantially the same shape as the cap flange, wherein the threaded cap is secured to the threaded vessel after being rotated in one direction approximately 180 degrees or less.
45. (New) The cap and vessel of claim 44, wherein the threaded cap is secured to the threaded vessel after being rotated in one direction approximately 90 degrees.
46. (New) A method for sealing a vessel, comprising the steps of:
 - placing a threaded cap having a cap flange on a threaded vessel having a corresponding vessel flange; and
 - securing the threaded cap to the threaded vessel a first time by rotating the threaded cap in one direction approximately 180 degrees or less.
47. (New) The method of claim 46, wherein securing the threaded cap comprises rotating the threaded cap in one direction approximately 90 degrees.